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What's Happening to Delinquent Children in Your Town?

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What's Happening to

Delinquent Children

in Your Town?

a guide for securing facts about certain agencies serving delinquent children

Prepared by the
Special Juvenile Delinquency Project
for the

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Preface

The numerous civic organizations cooperating with the Children's Bureau in its campaign for better services for delinquent children have all stressed the need for a guide by which to collect facts about these services in every community. These organizations have pointed out that they need to have the facts about current services and how to improve them for discussion with local officials and the public. Only with sound factual evidence will they be able to secure the necessary community support and action.

The Bureau, therefore, with the help of the Special Juvenile Delinquency Project, is issuing this present guide. It is intended to help citizens find out what their local delinquency situation is and what is being done to help the boys and girls who get in trouble become responsible and mature men and women. Used in a sincere and earnest way, and not as an instrument of criticism of individuals, it should, we hope, be a means of making a clear and honest appraisal of the local situation.

Probably no one group will find this document *perfect* for its particular use, for, as stated in the introduction, it was not possible to devise questions that would fit every community. Therefore, the guide will have to be adapted by its users. In addition, experience may show that it can be improved for more general application. And we shall try to improve it, if need be, in later editions, if those groups and individuals who use it will let us know of their experience. We should like to know, for example, whether it is too detailed—or not detailed enough. Are there certain questions that should be deleted? Are there questions that should be added?. In brief, how helpful has it been for use in *your* community?

With the knowledge gained by actual experience, perhaps we can make this guide better serve its purpose. Certainly the purpose for which it is intended should make us all want to contribute our best efforts.

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Chief, Children's Bureau.

Introduction

This pamphlet is intended to help citizen groups secure facts about the services for delinquent children offered by certain agencies in our communities and States. The agencies in question are five in number:

1. The police.
2. The juvenile court and its probation service.
3. The detention home, a home or facility in which children alleged to be delinquent are temporarily held.
4. The training school, an institution to which delinquent children are sent for rehabilitation.
5. The State agency that has the responsibility for developing and coordinating the services offered to delinquent children and their families by the four agencies mentioned above.

These are the agencies in our communities and in our States with which we entrust the major responsibility of turning young delinquents from careers of crime.

Gaining knowledge about these agencies is necessary as a prelude to action aimed at improving them. The need for action is pressing on two counts:

First, an increasingly large number of young people are getting in trouble with the law. We have only to glance at our daily newspapers to see this fact confirmed. These boys and girls should receive sound treatment to help them change their delinquent behavior before it becomes a fixed pattern.

Second, these agencies mentioned as having the major responsibility for helping delinquent children were finding their task a difficult one even before the current rise in delinquency began. They have been handicapped by lack of skilled staff. Not enough police officers are trained to work with juveniles. Too many juvenile court judges find that they have to release children without proper supervision or send them away to a training school—simply because they have no probation staff and the community fails to offer any other social resources. Too few of our training schools have the experienced and educated staff of specialists they need if they are to offer effective treatment to these young people in trouble. It is no wonder that, according to certain studies, more than 5 out of every 10 young people who appear before our juvenile courts go on to commit one or more serious crimes as adults.

A few cold figures that have to be faced

Juvenile delinquency began to increase again in 1948. The heightening of war tension and of defense preparation seems to have brought on the increase. Family living has reflected the stress and strain of the times. More children seriously misbehave.

Between 1948 and 1951 the number of alleged delinquent young people brought before juvenile courts reporting to the Children's Bureau rose an

estimated 17 percent. The total number of children in the country in the principal age group affected (from 10 to 17 years old) rose only 5 percent.

More than a million boys and girls a year are now picked up by the police for alleged acts of delinquency. Juvenile courts in the country saw an estimated 350,000 children in 1951 because of delinquency. These were the more serious cases.

Very likely there will be further increases in the number of delinquent children during the next few years. These increases will result from the expected tremendous gain in the total number of children 10 to 17 years old. The babies born during and after World War II are growing up. According to the Bureau of the Census, the total 10-to-17 age group is going to increase 42 percent between 1951 and 1960. For every 10 children in this age group we now see playing on the block, we shall be seeing 14 or more in 1960. Some of these children may get in serious trouble. They will need help, just as thousands of boys and girls already need help—better help than they are getting.

Where to begin?

Many citizen groups are aware of the pressing need for action to strengthen the agencies that serve delinquent children and to remedy their deficiencies. These citizen groups realize that although the figures reported are for the Nation as a whole, the story they tell is drawn from what is going on right in their own communities and neighborhoods. There is where the action must begin.

Before citizens can take action, however, they will want to know a few things. They must know, for example, how many boys and girls in their community get in trouble with the law each year. They must know the extent and quality of the services given these boys and girls by the various agencies that undertake to treat them. And, finally, they must know what kind of services these agencies *should be* offering.

It is for just this kind of fact-finding that this pamphlet is designed. By finding the answers to the questions in this pamphlet, citizen groups will get the facts they need for action. They will learn how many children are dealt with by each of these community agencies and exactly *how* these children are dealt with?

The gathering of these facts will be of little value, however, unless a citizen group also knows how to interpret them. This pamphlet is therefore best used in conjunction with background material. The assistance of experts is also important.

The Children's Bureau is publishing, along with this pamphlet, two others that citizens can use in interpreting the facts they gather. One of these is called HELPING DELINQUENT CHILDREN. It tells of the handicaps community agencies face in their work of turning young people from delinquency. It also describes what the services these agencies offer *should* be like.

The other document will be of particular value to the expert who counsels a citizen group seeking to improve any or all of these services. This document

is called RECOMMENDED STANDARDS FOR SERVICES FOR DELINQUENT CHILDREN. It sets forth desirable practices governing these particular agencies serving delinquent children. A somewhat technical document, it represents the study and thinking by numerous workers and authorities in the field of what the minimum standards for these agencies should be.

Keeping Proper Perspective

Other, more detailed suggestions about the use of this guide are included in the next part of this pamphlet. Some word should be added here, however, about the focus of the guide.

This guide offers a means to make a broad survey of a community's services for delinquent children. It does not offer a means for an exhaustive study of the agencies and services mentioned. Nor does it provide for study of the total child welfare program of services to children and youth, of which services for the treatment and prevention of juvenile delinquency are an integral part.

It was obviously impossible to devise questions that would cover all the situations in the 53 States and Territories and in many thousands of separate localities—all differing in population, social and economic condition, and in legal structure.

Study committees in some communities may find that they will want to inquire at first only about one or two of the several services, or they may want to inquire about a specific service further than this guide will take them. They may want to concentrate upon the juvenile court, for example, or upon the State agency responsible for planning and coordinating services on a statewide basis. In these cases, committees can adapt or supplement the guide as they need to.

In deciding about a study program, however, two cautions should be observed.

First, the study committee should not concentrate upon one service to the harmful neglect or exclusion of another. These services generally go hand in hand. Progress at one point must be supported by a move forward at the other points in the line of treatment.

Second, and equally important, the committee should not overlook the other agencies—both official and voluntary—that serve not only delinquent children but also *all* children. A program concerned with the various aspects of services for delinquent children cannot be a thing apart from concern for child welfare in general. A citizen group planning a study or community program centered around the delinquent child should attempt to relate its work in every way to efforts being made to meet the needs of all children.

At the same time it is encouraging to realize that improvement of service for delinquent children can lead to improvement of service for all children. A drive on behalf of delinquent children may bring in its wake better provisions and care for all children.

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Suggestions for Planning and Conducting a Survey of Services

Of course, the first thing to do is to find out whether the local delinquency situation has already been studied or whether a group is in the process of making a study. A committee or club can discover if either of these is the case by consulting the local council of social agencies or similar coordinating body, if there is one, or by inquiring of the juvenile court judge, the director of the public welfare department, or the head of a social agency in the community. Citizens should make every effort to discover what work has been done or is being done before they undertake a new survey. If a local program is already underway, an individual or group can simply join in at that particular point.

On the other hand, if a study program is yet to be started, a citizen group should not hesitate to make the initial move. However, it should be certain that the first action it takes meets two essential requirements. These are the need to enlist the participation of all interested elements in the community and the need to secure the assistance of experts for guidance and counsel.

Securing Community Representation

Although an individual or a single group may stimulate interest in a survey of agencies, participation of many persons with a wide variety of points of view is apt to make the study more successful—both in gathering material and in securing community acceptance of the report later on. Therefore, the group initiating the study should be certain that the committee that sponsors the survey or actually conducts it should be composed of representatives of all agencies and organizations in the community interested in the problem.

A good way to get broad representation is to have the study committee sponsored by the local council of social agencies or any other coordinating body that may be composed of lay and staff members of health, welfare, education, and civic agencies and organizations. If there is no such council or coordinating body, then the citizen group should form a committee, inviting appropriate organizations and agencies to send representatives.

Getting Expert Advice and Assistance

Expert advice should be sought at every stage in the development of a program to survey the agencies for delinquent children in a community. Who the "expert" will be depends on the particular stage or aspect of the program for which advice is needed—and also upon the size of the community.

A juvenile court judge or a probation officer, for example, may be among the first consulted as to whether a survey is needed and whether it should be a complete or partial survey. Someone from a local social agency may be the best person to consult about forming a representative committee to sponsor the survey. Then, in making the survey, the same judge, probation officer, or social worker, as well as many other persons, can play a part—helping citizens collect data and interpret it. Whenever possible, different parts of the study should be assigned to subcommittees, each headed by a person skilled in the particular field or otherwise experienced in health, educational, or social welfare work.

Of course, there are some matters on which any intelligent parent can be as much an expert as the most highly trained specialist. Any parent can ask himself, as he witnesses a juvenile court hearing or visits a detention home or a training school, "Is this what I should want for my child, if he were in trouble?"

In large communities, securing expert consultation may be no great problem. The council of social agencies, for example, may be able to recommend a consultant or even provide one.

In smaller communities the study committee should explore all local resources, consulting with public and private agencies and officials.

Sometimes the experts may have to be called in from outside—from a neighboring city, a university, or from State agencies. In many States, a community can appeal for assistance to the official State planning body for children and youth. The Governor's office should be able to put a group in contact with this planning body or with an appropriate agency.

In any case, whatever the circumstances, a survey group should seek out people with firsthand knowledge of local and State conditions for the help they can give. Expert advice and leadership will make it much easier to conduct a sound and constructive survey.

Sources of Information

Groups actually engaged in making a study will seek two different kinds of facts. One will be the solid, easy-to-obtain kind—for example, the number of officers on the local police force. The other kind will involve personal opinion and judgment—such as whether or not a detention facility has

sufficient space for outdoor play. Particular care must be used in determining this latter kind of fact.

For most of the sections in this guide, the most direct sources of information will be the local chief of police, the local juvenile court judge, the superintendent of the institution or home that provides secure custody for delinquent children awaiting official action, and the superintendents of the training institutions for delinquent boys and girls sent from the community. These training institutions are ordinarily State institutions.

Necessary information may also be obtained from State planning commissions or committees for children and youth, from State youth authorities, and from State departments of welfare, education, health, and public safety—and their local counterparts.

For certain types of information and assistance, local groups may need to apply to such public agencies as the State department of taxation, employment service or civil service commission—and, again, their local offices.

Statewide and local professional and lay organizations under private auspices can also make important contributions to a study. And the assistance of bar associations, medical associations, and associations of juvenile court judges, social workers, and probation officers will be particularly valuable.

A good deal of the statistical information may already be available in official reports to be found in the local library—or to be obtained by the librarian. The information may not be in the exact form demanded by the questions in this pamphlet, but quite often it will suffice the needs of the study group.

Questions of opinion will generally involve *what should be* rather than *what is*. For information that depends on opinion or judgment, the study group may need to rely heavily on the services of its expert consultants. A good procedure is to obtain the opinions of qualified persons and then to make a summation of such opinions.

For help in evaluating some of its findings, the group may find it advisable to draw upon printed material, such as the Children's Bureau publications mentioned in the Introduction: HELPING DELINQUENT CHILDREN and RECOMMENDED STANDARDS FOR SERVICES FOR DELINQUENT CHILDREN. Local libraries also offer numerous books and periodicals related to the subject. The Children's Bureau has recently published a bibliography on juvenile delinquency that may also be helpful.

It should be stressed that a study group will necessarily have to use ingenuity in seeking out the answers to many of the questions in this pamphlet. The information available often will not fit exactly the questions asked. And the questions may call for information that cannot be found. Adaptations must therefore be made to fit the situation.

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Using Information

The information a study group collects is valuable simply for aiding citizens to understand better the services that they, as taxpayers, support.

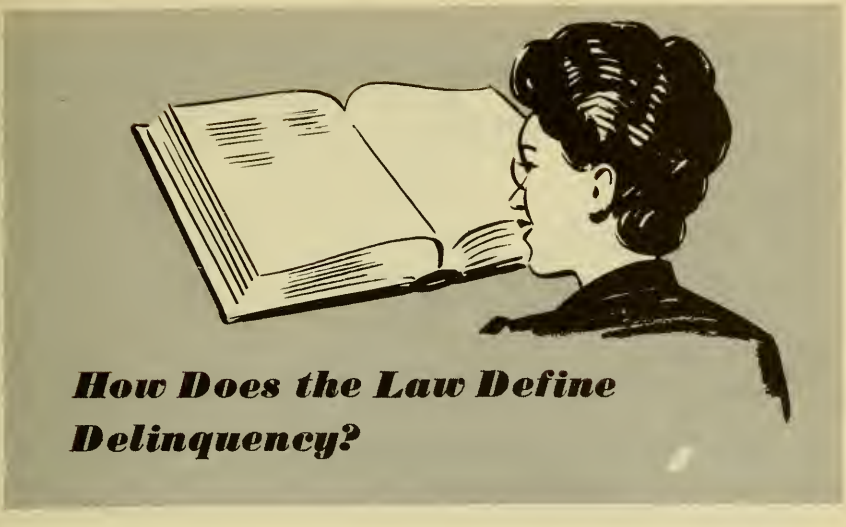
The information will be of greater value, of course, if it is used as the basis for constructive effort to make necessary improvements in the services for delinquent children.

For this, all the facts and opinions should first be drawn together in one report. When the final report is ready, all those who are interested in the care of delinquent children should study it—to determine what major needs are not being met by the services surveyed and why these needs are not being met.

The *why* will determine the next steps. Perhaps a change in administrative practice may be needed. In such a case, a quiet conference with certain public officials may do the job. In another instance, broad public support for a change in law or for additional funds may be required. In that case, full publicity for the report may be the only way of achieving substantial improvement.

Any desired improvement requires action on the part of some individual or organization. Ordinarily a group can arrive at a sound plan of procedure by working out thoughtful answers to these two questions: (1) Who has the power to make the desired improvement? and (2) What is the best way to go about getting the change made?

As a final suggestion, the most effective study-action programs are those launched in a cooperative spirit—without any thought of unveiling scandal or of crucifying a particular public official, however lax an occasional one may be. Public servants and citizens should try to work hand in hand to reach the goal to which all aspire. This is the best way to secure services so equipped and administered that they contribute fully to making every delinquent child a better man or woman.



How Does the Law Define Delinquency?

The delinquent child is *defined by law*—both Federal and State. In addition many municipalities have ordinances defining delinquent children. In some places the laws cover a surprisingly wide range of behavior. These laws vary considerably from State to State and from place to place.

● 1. Is there a juvenile court law for your community governing children and young people alleged to be delinquent?

● 2. According to this law, for what offenses or reasons connected with delinquency can a child be brought before the juvenile court?

● 3. To what age can a young person still be considered a juvenile according to this law?

● 4. Can young people below this upper age limit sometimes be tried in an adult court?

If so, under what circumstances?

How Do the Police Serve Children in Your Community?

The police department is usually the first official law enforcement agency with which the delinquent child has contact. Police officers see an estimated 1,000,000 alleged delinquent children each year. They see many more such children than do the personnel of any other agency dealing with official delinquents. The manner in which a police officer conducts himself with a child may have a substantial influence on the child's attitude toward the law. And the decision that an individual officer makes about a particular child he has apprehended can have great ramifications, both for the child and for the community. The police therefore warrant particular consideration in any program to improve measures for working with delinquent children.

Extent of Police Work

● 1. How many juveniles have the officers of your police department had contact with during each of the past five years because of alleged acts of delinquency? (NOTE.—Exclude contacts with children occurring in recreation, character building, or safety programs conducted by the police department.) *

● 2. How many of these young people did the police take to juvenile court?

● 3. How many did the police *not* refer to the juvenile court?

Of those children *not referred* to the juvenile court, how many did the police release immediately, without further action?

*The five-year period is suggested throughout this document because it is valuable to determine a trend. However, questions relating to statistics must be adapted to meet local situations. In some instances, data may be available for only a limited period and in forms different from those specified here. Sometimes, of course, no data at all may be available.

● 4. In the case of children *not referred* to the juvenile court, does the police officer sometimes seek out the parents of a child to inform them of the child's misbehavior?

Does the police officer sometimes notify school authorities?

Does he sometimes refer the child to a religious adviser? To a recreational or other youth-serving organization? To a welfare or health agency?

Does the police officer sometimes himself work with the child and his family toward the child's readjustment or does he always refer children to a community agency such as those mentioned above? If his practice varies, what determines which children shall be referred to an agency?

(NOTE.—If possible, secure figures that show how frequently police officers take the steps indicated in the above question.)

● 5. Do police officers in your community *place* children in detention without first bringing them to the juvenile court?

If so, under what circumstances do policemen take such action?

How soon after such action is taken does the policeman have to notify the juvenile court?

How many children were placed in detention by the police last year?

● 6. Is a police officer in your community empowered to *release* a child from detention without first having received permission from the juvenile court to do so?

If so, under what circumstances can a child be so released?

● 7. If a police officer in your community apprehends a child because of alleged delinquency and does not release him immediately, when and by whom are the parents of the child notified of his whereabouts?

Special Juvenile Services

● 8. What is the total number of police officers on your community's police force?

● 9. Are there any officers on your community's police force designated as having special responsibility for work with juveniles?

(NOTE.—*If the answer to the above question is "YES," then you will want to find answers to the questions that follow. If the answer is "NO," then simply go on to Question 10.*)

(a) How many officers on your community's force are designated as having special responsibility for work with children?

(b) How many of these officers are full time? How many part time?

(c) How many are men? How many women?

(d) Are these officers assigned to a special unit or bureau—such as a juvenile aid bureau, youth bureau, or crime prevention bureau—that is concerned primarily with work with children? If so, what is the title of this special unit or bureau?

(e) Do the juvenile officers on your police force have any of the following responsibilities?

(1) To take charge of the cases of children referred to them after apprehension by other members or branches of the police force?
(2) To locate and apprehend boys and girls believed to be delinquent?
(3) To handle cases of adults charged with offenses against children?
(4) To patrol parks, theaters, bars, poolrooms, dance halls, and similar spots in order to suppress conditions conducive to delinquency and to take appropriate police action on behalf of boys and girls found in such situations?
(5) To compile information (statistics, maps and the like) that will enable the juvenile unit to focus its work and to enlist the aid of other agencies in efforts related to neighborhoods of special need?

(f) Which of the functions mentioned in question 4 (p. 7) are performed exclusively by juvenile officers? Which are performed in part by juvenile officers and in part by regular officers?

(g) Does your community police department require any education, training, or experience of officers assigned to juvenile work over and above the education, training, or experience required for appointment to the police force?

If so, what are these special requirements?

What are the requirements for appointment to the general police force?

(h) Do officers assigned to juvenile work receive any special training for work with or on behalf of children after they have been appointed as juvenile aid officers?

If so, what is the nature of that special training?

● 10. Is your community police department represented in any community council through which the schools, churches, and health, welfare, and other official and civic organizations undertake joint planning toward the solution of community problems and seek to coordinate their respective activities?

● 11. Does the police department use procedures in apprehending, transporting, identifying, questioning, and holding children different from those used in the case of adult offenders?

If so, how are they different? (For example, do the procedures used in police contacts with children promote a respect for but not a fear and hatred of legal authority? Do they stigmatize the child, in his own eyes or in the eyes of the community, as a "criminal"?)

● 12. Does your community police department offer a training program for all its officers?

If so, does that training program include instruction in the differences between the way juveniles should be handled and the way adults should be handled, according to law and usage, and in other matters pertaining to delinquency control?

The juvenile court is a key agency in the treatment process for child offenders. The court decides whether the facts about a child are such as to justify his being adjudicated "delinquent." The decision the court makes may affect the entire future life of a child. The court does not consider the delinquent child to be a criminal, nor does it aim to punish. It seeks to determine how best the child can be restored to his community a good citizen.

The Court Itself

● 1. Is there a juvenile court in your community?

If not, in what court are cases involving the delinquent behavior of children heard?

● 2. Is the juvenile court administratively independent or is it a part of another court?

● 3. How many days per month is the juvenile court in session in your community?

Are sessions heard at regular intervals?

● 4. Does the court that hears children's cases follow procedures different from those used in local courts trying cases of adult offenders?

If so, how do these procedures differ?

● 5. Has the juvenile court its own building? Its own room?

Is court held in rooms used also for other purposes?

● 6. Is the general public barred from the room in which juvenile court cases are heard?

● 7. How many court functionaries are ordinarily present during the hearing of a case?

Why is each of these persons there?

● 8. Are juvenile court records kept confidential?

Who can secure access to information in the juvenile court records?

● 9. Can children appearing before the juvenile court because of alleged delinquency have legal counsel?

What provision is made for informing them of this right?

Roughly, what percent of the children who came before the juvenile court last year were represented by counsel?

The Judge

● 10. How is your local juvenile court judge selected? By election? By appointment?

● 11. Are there any special qualifications as to education, training, or experience that an individual must meet before he can assume the post of juvenile court judge in your community?

If so, what are they?

● 12. Does the judge of your local juvenile court have status, prestige, and salary commensurate with his duties? Compare his position in these respects to that of judges of other local courts.

● 13. Does the judge of your local juvenile court devote himself exclusively to cases involving children?

Does he have other duties? Does he try cases not involving children?

Can he give all the time he thinks necessary to the proper discharge of his duties as a juvenile court judge?

The Probation Counselors

● 14. Does your local juvenile court have available to it the services of probation workers for delinquent children?

If so, are these workers part of the court organization? Are they county welfare workers? Are they persons employed by some other agency or organization?

● 15. How many probation workers are available to serve the juvenile court? Is the number of workers sufficient so that the judge may assign for probation all the children he wishes to, with the certainty that they will receive the attention they need?

● 16. What education and training is required of the persons who serve the juvenile court as probation workers?

● 17. What education and experience did the persons who now serve the juvenile court as probation workers have prior to their appointment?

● 18. Are the persons who serve the juvenile court as probation workers covered by a civil-service merit system?

Diagnostic and Treatment Services

● 19. Is a social and psychological study made of children appearing before the juvenile court? Who makes it?

Is the study reported in written form?

How is it used by the judge?

● 20. Does your juvenile court judge base his decision about a boy or girl on that child's need for rehabilitative treatment (with due regard for public safety, of course)?

● 21. Are the following services available for the juvenile court to use in the interest of children?

(a) Services of a clinic or psychiatrist for psychiatric diagnosis and treatment of children and their parents?

(b) Case-work services, offered by a public or private agency, that provide children and parents with the skilled guidance of a trained social worker?

(c) Medical services, so that children with physical disorders may receive necessary care?

(d) Psychological services, so that modern tests and measurements may be used to gain understanding of a child?

(e) Foster homes, so that children who cannot remain in their own homes but who should not be institutionalized can receive care in a suitable family setting?

(f) Social group work services, offered by a public or private agency, to provide for healthy and therapeutic group contacts?

● 22. If such services are available, are they sufficient to meet the needs of every child who might require their attention?

23. Are there community activities—recreational, religious, educational, housing, and so on—that contribute to a planned program of rehabilitation for delinquent children?

The Children and What They Did

● 24. How many young people were referred to your local juvenile court because of delinquency during each of the past five years?*

How many of them were referred by the police? By parents? Schools? Social agencies? Other agencies or persons?

How many boys were referred? Girls? What was the ratio of boys to girls each year?

● 25. For what offenses were boys and girls brought to the juvenile court during each of the past five years?

How many were brought in for each offense (truancy, incorrigibility, and so on)?

Has the number of serious offenses committed increased from year to year?

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*See footnote, p. 6.

● 26. During each of the past five years, how many boys and how many girls referred to the juvenile court for delinquency were under 10 years of age?

Between 10 and 12? Between 12 and 14?

Between 14 and 16? Between 16 and 18?

Over 18?

What was the average age during each of the five years?

Is the average age going up or down?

● 27. How many children who were referred for delinquency to the local juvenile court last year had been before that court previously in regard to an act of delinquency?

Disposition of Their Cases

● 28. How many children referred to the juvenile court because of delinquency last year were dealt with on an official basis? (An "official" case is one in which a formal petition is filed and the case is disposed of by official court procedure.)

● 29. Does your local juvenile court have a procedure whereby certain cases are handled informally, or unofficially?

If so, what percentage of all the children referred to the juvenile court during the past year were dealt with on an unofficial basis?

Who determines whether a child will be dealt with officially or unofficially?

How is this decision made?

Describe the process by which a child who is referred to the court because of delinquency is dealt with on an unofficial basis.

What disposition was made of children dealt with by the court last year on an unofficial basis?

● 30. How many cases of children handled officially by the juvenile court last year were *dismissed?*

● 31. As a result of juvenile court disposition of official delinquency cases, how many boys and girls were referred to a health or welfare agency in the community during each of the past five years?

How many were referred to a psychiatric clinic?

How many were placed on probation?

How many were placed in foster family homes?

How many were committed to institutions for delinquent children?

What has been the relative trend during these five years: more children released to the community, or more going to institutions?

● 32. How many children who were on probation during the past year successfully completed probation?

How many were ordered to appear before the court again so that a different form of treatment might be considered because they failed to make adjustment while on probation?

How many are still on probation?

Do You Know About Children Held in Detention?

Some delinquent children must be detained in secure custody during the course of official proceedings. These children may be held for a number of reasons. Sometimes there may be reason to believe the child will commit a new delinquency if he is allowed to remain at liberty. Or there may be no other way to ensure a child's presence at a court hearing except by placing him in secure custody.

The child placed under lock and key because of an alleged act of delinquency is usually a disturbed and unhappy child. He may be spending his first night away from home. The way in which he is treated can have a profound effect upon him—and also be of ultimate importance to the community. Properly carried out, detention can be the first step in the rehabilitation of a delinquent child. But if the child is held in improper quarters, without a program designed for his needs, detention may give rise to attitudes—increased resentment against authority, for example—that encourage rather than diminish delinquency.

In addition to the delinquent children who must be held in secure custody, there are other children who come before the juvenile court who require other forms of temporary care. The questions given here, however, apply only to the group of children detained in secure custody.

Detention Practices

● 1. In your community where are children held in secure custody: In a special juvenile detention home? The city or county jail? Police lockup?
● 2. If more than one facility is used, how many children were placed in each facility during each of the past five years?

● 3. What was the total number of children held in secure custody during each of the past five years?

How many were boys? How many girls?

Was the trend in numbers upward or downward during the five-year period?

● 4. Of the total number of children referred to the juvenile court last year because of alleged delinquency, what percent were detained in secure custody?

● 5. Of the group of children held in secure custody last year, how many were under 10 years of age?

Between 10 and 13?

Between 13 and 15?

Between 15 and 17?

Older than 17?

(NOTE.—If more than one detention facility is currently in use for secure custody, show the age breakdown for each facility.)

● 6. Of all the children detained in secure custody during the past year, how many were held for a total period of less than one week?

Between 1 and 2 weeks?

Between 2 and 4 weeks?

For more than a month?

For more than 2 months?

For more than 3 months?

● 7. How long did children remain in secure custody during the past year *before* they had their *first* juvenile court hearing?

How many remained overnight?

How many remained—

1 day?
2 days?
3 days?
4 days?
5 days?
6 days?

How many remained—

1 week?
1 to 2 weeks?
2 to 3 weeks?
3 to 4 weeks?

How many remained more than a month while awaiting their *first* juvenile court hearing?

● 8. What person or persons have authority to *place* a child in secure custody?

What person or persons have authority to *release* a child from secure detention?

If more than one person or agency has authority to place a child in secure detention, how many children were so placed by each person or agency during the past year?

● 9. In your community, is it the practice to get in touch with a child's parents when he or she is placed in detention?

Who is responsible for this?

Is it accomplished?

● 10. Can a child be admitted to detention at any hour of day or night?

● 11. Is the detention facility in which children in secure custody are housed also used for the care of children who do not require secure custody but who are homeless or neglected by their parents, or who require psychiatric or medical study and treatment?

● 12. In your community, could detention be avoided in some cases and shortened in others—

If court hearings were held more frequently?

If more adequate social services (probation services) were available to determine the need for detention?

If more adequate social services (probation services) were available to supervise children in their own homes while awaiting final disposition?

The Detention Facility and Program

● 13. Is the building used for detention of delinquent children *fireproof?*

Is it fairly *escape-proof* and yet not like a prison?

Is it easy to keep clean and in good order?

Is it constructed so as to permit easy observation of the children by the staff?

Is the general atmosphere of the building one of cheerfulness and livability?

● 14. Is the school program in the detention facility adapted to the special needs of delinquent children in temporary care?

How does it differ from the program of regular community schools?

Is the school program under the supervision of the local board of education?

● 15. Does the detention facility make full provision for participation of the child in religious services of his own faith?

● 16. Does the faculty possess an abundant supply of play and occupational material and equipment that is accessible to the children for use during their free time?

● 17. Is there space enough for vigorous indoor play activity?

Is there sufficient outdoor play space?

● 18. Are the medical and health aspects of the detention program under the overall supervision of a physician?

● 19. Is a physician available to give medical service in the event of an emergency?

● 20. Are the services of a registered nurse available to the facility?

● 21. Are suitable quarters set aside for children who are ill and who require bed care but not hospital care?

● 22. Does the director of the detention facility report staff observations on each child to the juvenile court judge for his use in planning further treatment?

● 23. Does your detention facility have available to it the services of a psychiatrist? Psychologist? Social worker?

If so, what training and experience did these professional persons have prior to their present position?

● 24. What education and experience did the superintendent of your detention facility have prior to appointment to his present position?

● 25. Are the key positions in your detention facility staff covered by civil service requirements?

● 26. Is the staff of the facility large enough to insure supervision of small groups of children in program activities?

● 27. Are salary scales and working conditions such as to attract qualified personnel?

● 28. Is a continuous inservice training program offered the staff?

*To What Kind of Institutions Are Your Delinquent Children Sent?**

Whenever possible, a child who has become delinquent should be treated in his own community—either in his own home or in a foster home. Juvenile court judges usually are aware of this fact and they are generally reluctant to send a young person away from the community. In practice, though, circumstances may force the judge to commit a child to the training school—the name usually given these institutions. Local treatment resources may be so inadequate or family or community sentiment so hostile to a child, that the judge has no other recourse. Therefore, in addition to trying to help the children who particularly need the group life and care it offers, the training school faces the heavy responsibility of working with children for whom everything else has failed. The training school is often a social measure of last resort in our treatment process for helping maladjusted children to become more stable and secure individuals and better citizens.

Commitment from the Juvenile Court†

● 1. How many young people were committed by your local juvenile court to a training school or other institution for delinquent children during each of the past five years? How many were boys? How many were girls? Was the trend of the numbers committed upward or downward?

*It is recognized that a State agency or a State training school may be excessively burdened if it has to give separate answers for some of the questions in this section to many different local groups. One or two solutions for this problem have been suggested. In one State, the public agency responsible for coordinating and planning services for delinquent children is mimeographing the necessary information for distribution to survey groups. A training school might do the same, if it does not already prepare an annual report giving such information. In another State, the State branch of a national civic organization is undertaking to gather information about the questions in this section as they apply to the State as a whole. Local branches of this civic organization can thus get the information they need from the State branch office.

†These data are best gotten from the local juvenile court rather than from the training school. See, also, footnote on p. 6.

● 2. What are the names and locations of the institutions to which these children were committed?

● 3. What are some of the reasons that prompt the judge to commit a child to an institution rather than to allow him to remain in the community?

Would the judge have placed some of the children in foster homes or have let them remain in their own homes if local social services had been adequate?

For approximately how many children would he have made such arrangements?

What desirable types of facilities or services are lacking that prevent his making such arrangements?

Were some physically handicapped, mentally retarded, or emotionally disturbed children committed to institutions for delinquent children because no proper specialized facilities for them were available? How many such children were so committed?

*Children in Institutions**

● 4. What is the capacity of the institution for delinquent children serving your community? Is the institution required to operate above capacity? Is it small enough to make it possible for the staff to attend to the needs of the individual child?

● 5. What was the average daily population during each of the past five years?

● 6. How many children received by the institution during each of the past 5 years were less than 10 years old?

How many between 10 and 12?

Between 12 and 14?

Between 14 and 16?

Between 16 and 18?

How many over 18?

What was the average age of the children in the institution during each of the past five years?

Was the trend of the average age upward or downward?

● 7. How many children received by the institution during the past year were diagnosed at any time by a psychiatrist as having severe emotional disturbances?

How many were mentally retarded?

How many had a severe reading disability?

How many were below their normal level of educational achievement?

How many had pronounced physical handicaps?

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*Most communities are served by at least two and possibly more training schools. In addition to the State training school or schools, some counties and municipalities operate institutions for delinquent children, and in some instances juvenile courts commit children to private institutions. The questions that follow should be answered in regard to each of the various training schools to which children from your community are sent. The questions are therefore phrased in the singular.

● 8. What are some of the kinds of delinquent acts that the children in the institution committed?

● 9. How many of the children in the institution have previously been in institutions for delinquent children?

● 10. How many of the children in the institution had been known to juvenile courts prior to the juvenile court experience leading to their current commitment?

● 11. From what source or sources does the institution accept children?

● 12. Who determines how long a child remains in the institution?
How is this decision made?

● 13. What is the average length of stay in the institution?
Is review made of each case at the end of a specified time or times?
By whom is this review made?

● 14. How much is the annual budget of the institution? (Does this include expenditures for constructing new buildings, etc? Does it exclude the value of foods and other goods produced at the school?)
What was the average annual per capita cost during the past fiscal year for maintaining a child in the institution?

Institutional Living

● 15. What is done during the period immediately after admission to help young people accustom themselves to their new environment?
By what means are children studied in order to gain understanding of their needs?

● 16. What opportunities, if any, are provided for the children in the training school to use school, recreational, religious, and other facilities in neighboring communities?
Which children have such opportunities?

● 17. Do residents of neighboring communities participate in training school activities?
How do they participate and how often?

● 18. Does the training school maintain close contact with the parents of children in the institution so as to strengthen development of family ties in those cases where such is desirable?
How and by whom is such contact initiated and maintained?

● 19. Are certain children in the training school permitted to make home visits?
What are the conditions governing these home visits?

● 20. With whom can the children correspond?
Is the number of incoming or outgoing letters limited?

● 21. Are the dining rooms in the training school attractive and homelike?
Do staff members eat with the boys and girls?
Do they eat the same food?
Are the meals for the young people appetizing and nutritious?

● 22. What are the school regulations pertaining to dress and personal appearance?

May children receive and wear clothing sent from home?

Are the children in uniform?

Must their hair be cut in a standard fashion?

● 23. What personal articles may a young person keep in his possession?

Do the children have an opportunity to purchase such items?

If so, how and where?

● 24. By what means do children obtain personal funds: Money from home? Wages for work? Allowance from the school?

● 25. What types of disciplinary measures are used in the schools: Corporal punishment? Deprivation of privileges? Isolation?

What determines the kind of discipline a young person receives?

● 26. Are the grounds and buildings of the training school adequate for the needs of the program?

Are the buildings architecturally sound for the purpose for which they are used? (In the opinion of the staff? In the opinion of a qualified architect?)

● 27. Are the cottages or group living units in the school attractive, homelike and livable?

Are they easy to maintain in good condition?

Are they constructed in such a fashion that it is easy for the staff to supervise the children?

The Institution Staff

● 28. How is the superintendent or director of your training school selected? On the basis of merit alone? By whom?

● 29. What education, training, and experience did the superintendent of your training school have prior to taking his present position?

● 30. Is the superintendent in any way responsible to a board?

If so, what are the functions of the board?

Who appoints the members?

What are the qualifications for appointment?

How often does the board meet?

● 31. Does the training school have available the services of a psychiatrist?

If so, what education, training, and experience did he have prior to his present appointment?

What is the nature of his work in the school?

● 32. Does the training school have available the services of one or more clinical psychologists?

If so, what education, training, and experience did they have prior to their present appointment?

What is the nature of their work at the school?

● 33. Does the training school have available the services of one or more social workers?

If so, what education, training, and experience did they have prior to their present appointment?

What is the nature of their work at the school?

● 34. Who supervises the program in the group living units: Single supervisor? House parents?

What are the duties and responsibilities of these supervisors?

What education, training, and experience did they have prior to their being appointed to their present positions?

What are the qualifications for appointment?

Are they covered by a merit system?

● 35. Do the teachers in the training school meet State standards for certification?

Are they selected for their professional qualifications?

Do they have special training and experience in handling emotionally disturbed children?

What education and experience did the teachers have prior to their present appointment?

● 36. Does the training school have available the services of one or more recreation leaders?

What training did they have for their work?

● 37. Is the staff of the training school selected on the basis of merit alone?

Do they have tenure of position?

Do they have opportunity to advance?

Do they receive compensation at least equal to that paid in the community to persons with similar training, experience, and responsibility?

● 38. Does the training school provide for development of staff:

By in-service training?

By leaves of absence for educational purposes?

By encouraging active participation in professional and community affairs?

The Institution Program

● 39. Do children in the training school have educational opportunities equivalent to those offered in the community?

Is the educational program adapted to the needs of institutionalized delinquent children?

What special adaptation has been made?

How does the program differ from that in a regular community school?

● 40. Are children in the educational program placed in classroom groups according to their learning capacity?

● 41. Do the teachers in the training school have available to them a variety of teaching aids that facilitate learning by eye and ear?

What kind of such teaching aids are available?

● 42. Does the vocational education program in the training school provide occupational opportunities suited to the abilities of the young people and to their needs when they return to community life?

What opportunities are provided?

● 43. Is the vocational education integrated with the academic education in such a manner that they supplement and strengthen each other?

How is this done?

● 44. Does the training school have a recreational program?

Of what does this program consist?

● 45. Are ample provisions made at the training school for the religious training of a child in his own faith?

How many chaplains serve the school?

What faiths do they represent?

Where and how often do they hold services?

● 46. Are hospital beds available for the children in the training school?

How many are available?

Where are they located?

● 47. Is there an infirmary or other facility suitable for care of minor physical ailments?

What is the extent of these facilities?

● 48. Does the training school have available the services of a physician?

● 49. Does the training school have available the services of at least one registered nurse?

● 50. Does the training school have available the services of consultants and specialists who supplement the medical staff regularly available to the school?

What kind of specialists are available?

● 51. Is there an aftercare program for the guidance of boys and girls released from the training school?

Who conducts this aftercare program?

What training have the persons who conduct the aftercare?

How many children does each worker care for?

● 52. What plan is there for contact between the training school and the community to which the child will return?

Are arrangements made for local social workers to help develop a place for the child on his release to his own community? Are contacts made with the local school and with community recreational and group work agencies? With the child's church?

Are the child's home and neighborhood conditions taken into consideration in the planning for his release and return to community living?

Are the child's achievements in the training school made known to his family and school?

If it is planned for the youngster to work after his release, is he helped to find suitable employment?

*How are Services Throughout The State Knit Together?**

Previous questions have concerned services for individual children offered by specific agencies. Local citizen groups may find that some of the inadequacies of these services may stem from lack of a sound statewide pattern of organization and administration. They will therefore want to gain some knowledge of the services rendered through the State as a whole and of the manner in which they are knit together.

Services to delinquent children are often insufficient or inadequate simply because they are the sole responsibility of political subdivisions—a city, county, or township, for example—of the State that cannot by themselves do any better. Local services are often starved for want of adequate financial support. Or they suffer from lack of technical information and knowledge.

Other ills may also result. There may be a great deal of duplication of effort on the part of different State and local agencies. The various agencies may act at cross-purposes. One subdivision may offer good services in contrast to a neighboring subdivision's mediocre service. Geography rather than need may decide the kind of care a child receives.

The development of a sound statewide program for the organization and administration of services for delinquent children may be fundamental to the improvement of those services at the community level.

*See footnote (*) on p. 17 for comment pertinent to this section.

State Agency to Serve Delinquent Children

● 1. In your State, which State agency or department has the main responsibility for promoting the development of the various services to delinquent children discussed in preceding sections of this study guide?

What are the functions of this agency or department?

● 2. Is this unit of State government an independent agency or department or is it a bureau or similar division of a larger State department or agency?

● 3. Describe the State administrative unit with major responsibility for services to delinquent children.

How is it organized? How many persons are employed?

What qualifications are required for professional and technical staff?

● 4. Does this State unit have responsibility for services to delinquent children only or does it also have responsibility for services to dependent and neglected children?

● 5. In addition to the State government unit that has *major* responsibility for services to delinquent children, is there any other State government unit that has certain responsibilities for services to these children?

Describe the responsibilities and functions of this Government unit.

● 6. What duties do the State laws place upon the various units of State government in respect to services for delinquent children?

Are these units able to fulfill their responsibilities fixed by law?

If they are not, why not?

If not, what effort is being made to enable them to carry out their legal responsibilities?

Police Services

● 7. How many political subdivisions of the State maintain police departments?

● 8. How many police officers are employed throughout the entire State?

● 9. How many police departments in the State maintain special units for work with juveniles?

● 10. Of all police officers in the State, how many have been designated as having special duties in regard to working with children?

● 11. Of all police departments in the State that have specially designated juvenile officers, how many require special training and experience for those officers over and beyond that required for appointment to the general police force?

● 12. Is there any educational institution or organization within the State that offers training for juvenile police officers?

● 13. Is there any State agency or department that offers consultation service to local police forces in order to aid them develop juvenile police services?

● 14. Is there any provision made by a State agency that enables police officers to get training as juvenile officers?

Juvenile Court and Probation

● 15. Does your State have a juvenile court law statewide in application?

● 16. Do you have a statewide juvenile court system?

If not, which political subdivisions of the State have responsibility for maintaining juvenile courts?

● 17. Is there any State agency that offers consultative service to juvenile court judges interested in bettering their court?

● 18. Does your State have a statewide juvenile probation service?

If so, which State agency is responsible for maintaining this service?

If not, which political subdivisions (counties, municipalities) of the State are responsible for providing probation service for the juvenile court?

● 19. In how many counties in the State does the juvenile court have no probation service?

● 20. Is there any State agency or department that offers technical advice and consultation on the subject of juvenile probation service?

● 21. Is there any State agency or department that pays part or all the cost of providing juvenile probation service at the local level?

If so, under what conditions is such payment made?

● 22. Is there any State department or agency that sets standards for juvenile probation services?

If so, must those standards be strictly adhered to by political subdivisions of the State or are they merely suggested standards?

● 23. Is there any State department or agency that aids untrained probation officers to secure appropriate training?

Detention in Secure Custody

● 24. Is there any State department or agency responsible for providing detention care in secure custody for delinquent children throughout the State?

If not, which political subdivisions of the State are responsible for construction and maintenance of detention homes?

● 25. In how many counties of your State are children detained in jail?

● 26. How many counties of your State are without separate detention facilities for delinquent children?

● 27. Does any State department or agency offer technical advice or consultation on the subject of detention care?

● 28. Does any State department or agency reimburse political subdivisions for the cost of constructing or maintaining detention homes?

● 29. Does any State department or agency set standards for detention care?

If so, are these standards mandatory for political subdivisions or are they merely suggestive?

● 30. Can two or more political subdivisions of your State join together to maintain a detention center on a regional basis?

If so, have any done so?

Institutions for Delinquent Children

● 31. Are your State institutions for delinquent children conducted by a State department or agency as part of an integrated child welfare program?

● 32. How many counties or municipalities in your State conduct their own institutions for delinquent children?

● 33. Do local institutions for delinquent children receive funds from any State department or agency?

If so, under what circumstances are such funds made available?

Are the funds—State and local—sufficient to provide the supervision, treatment services, and educational program required for satisfactory rehabilitation?

● 34. Is any State department or agency responsible foı licensing and supervising institutions for delinquent children?

● 35. Is any State department or agency responsible for setting standards for institutions for delinquent children?

If so, are those standards mandatory upon all institutions for delinquent children within the State or are they merely suggestive?

How do they affect public and private institutions?

Are they applied equally?

How often are they revised?

Coordination of Services

● 36. Is there in your State an interdepartmental committee or similar device whereby the executive heads of such departments as Education, Welfare, Health, and Mental Health coordinate their activities in the interest of children in the State?

● 37. Do you have in your State an official planning body for children and youth through which citizens and professional persons join together to plan and coordinate services for all children?

If so, does that official planning body have a permanent full-time staff? Part-time staff? Is it established by law? How does it get funds for its operations?

● 38. In how many political subdivisions of the State are there local bodies through which citizens and professional workers join together to plan and coordinate local services for children?

● 39. Is there in your State a department or agency prepared to aid a political subdivision that wishes to organize a local planning body?

If so, what kind of assistance does the department or agency give?

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